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Chair: Mr. Gunnarsson ..... (Iceland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 72: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/C.3/72/L.42 and A/C.3/72/L.54)

Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.42: Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine

1. **Mr. González Serafini** (Argentina) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on the grounds that the draft resolution contained a number of provisions that went beyond the remit of the Committee. Nevertheless, Argentina endorsed the recommendations made in the thematic report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine), and reiterated the need for human rights to be respected in accordance with the principles of international law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Human rights in Crimea must be upheld, in particular with regard to the allegations of violations relating to ethnic discrimination and restrictions affecting the Tatar minority. In addition, unfettered access to humanitarian assistance must be ensured everywhere, in compliance with international norms.

2. **Ms. Kirianoff Crimmins** (Switzerland) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, as it shared the concerns expressed by the sponsors with regard to the human rights situation in Crimea. Her delegation also supported the call made in the relevant OHCHR report for more robust international monitoring of the human rights situation in Crimea. Nevertheless, the Committee should give impartial and thorough consideration to the responsibilities of all parties involved in human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. Those responsible must fulfil their obligations under international law and implement the recommendations made by the OHCHR in order to ensure that the human rights of all individuals in Crimea were respected.

3. In addition, Third Committee draft resolutions should focus foremost on social, humanitarian and human rights issues affecting people around the world, in accordance with its mandate; the draft resolution in question went beyond that purview. Switzerland would continue to support the proper consideration of country-specific situations by the Committee as well as by the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms.

4. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on the draft resolution in order to avoid the politicization of humanitarian and human rights issues, since the matter of territorial integrity was not within the remit of either the Committee or the Human Rights Council. Mexico condemned any use of force or other action undermining the territorial integrity or sovereignty of any State, as territorial integrity was vital to preserving international peace and security. In that context, he recalled that his delegation had voted in favour of the earlier General Assembly resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, as it shared the concern expressed by the international community regarding the situation in Crimea and Sevastopol, and endorsed the call for preservation of the sovereignty, political independence and territorial unity of Ukraine.

5. Mexico was concerned about the significant deterioration of the human rights situation in Crimea, as well as the new type of citizenship and legal framework being imposed on its residents, which ran counter to international humanitarian law. Denials of access to Crimea by the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine were also of concern, as the mission's mandate covered Ukraine as a whole, within its internationally recognized borders.

6. **Mr. De Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote. And it had expressed its concern about the gravity of the situation in Ukraine since the early stages of the crisis. Nevertheless, the text of the draft resolution did not contribute to reducing tensions between the parties concerned. Brazil urged those parties to take all necessary steps to prevent human rights violations on the ground and find a peaceful solution to the crisis. Furthermore, all relevant stakeholders must foster an environment conducive to a permanent solution to the crisis, one that respected human rights and the Charter of the United Nations.

7. **Ms. Kaszás** (Hungary) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, as it supported the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Ukraine, but it had been unable to join the sponsors since the draft resolution failed to adequately address Ukraine's commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of minorities in all its territories in accordance with its obligations under the relevant multilateral and bilateral agreements. Hungary remained concerned about a new Ukrainian education law which significantly limited the rights of students in secondary and higher education who belonged to national minorities to receive education in their mother tongue. Ukraine must respect the fundamental rights of

members of minority groups living under its jurisdiction.

8. **Ms. Michaelidou** (Cyprus) said that her delegation supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Cyprus had voted in favour of the draft resolution, but disassociated itself from the paragraphs relating to the Crimean Tatars, a minority whose representatives had systematically supported the secessionist entity in occupied Cyprus, in violation of Security Council resolutions and contrary to the principles that the draft resolution was meant to uphold.

9. **Mr. Christodoulidis** (Greece) said that his delegation had also voted in favour of the draft resolution, although it shared the concerns expressed by the representative of Cyprus regarding the paragraphs referring to the Crimean Tatars.

10. **Ms. Ali** (Singapore) said that Singapore had voted in line with its consistent and principled position against country-specific resolutions, which were highly selective and driven by political rather than human rights considerations. Nevertheless, its vote should not be interpreted as taking a position on the substance of the human rights issues raised in the various draft resolutions, nor did it imply any derogation from or altered position on General Assembly resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine

11. **Ms. Kipiani** (Georgia) said that her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution and was deeply concerned by the alarming human rights situation in Russian-occupied Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, where people were subjected to discrimination, violence, extrajudicial killings, abductions, enforced disappearances and other serious violations of their basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, as reported by OHCHR. The human rights situation in Crimea had significantly deteriorated since the beginning of its occupation by the Russian Federation. The draft resolution was hence an important instrument to urge the Russian Federation to comply fully with its obligations under international law, and to allow proper and unimpeded access to Crimea for international human rights monitoring mechanisms.

Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.54: Situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

12. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

13. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), introducing the draft resolution, said that the situation of human rights in Syria had continued to deteriorate over the previous few months. Damascus had become a hotbed of sectarianism, Aleppo had been emptied of its inhabitants and millions of Syrians had become refugees in countries near and far. Meanwhile, Syrian forces and their allies, including Iran, the terrorist group Hizbullah and mercenaries, continued to terrorise and subjugate Syrian civilians. It was imperative to adopt the draft resolution under consideration because all the circumstances condemned in previous resolutions on the situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic remained as before; there were still more than 11 million Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons, thousands of Syrians remained missing or had been buried in mass graves and an entire generation of Syrian children were still denied their right to education. Furthermore, the United Nations had proven that the Syrian armed forces had used chemical weapons against Syrian men, women and children.

14. The draft resolution condemned all human rights violations regardless, of who had perpetrated them. It also reflected the findings of United Nations reports that had concluded that the Syrian authorities bore primary responsibility for human rights violations in that country.

15. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic would no doubt claim, as he had many times in the past, that his country was engaged in a war against terrorism. He would also make every effort to move the current debate away from the situation of human rights in his country by making baseless allegations against Saudi Arabia and the other sponsors of the draft resolution.

16. The representative of Saudi Arabia urged delegations to listen to their moral consciences and to stand by the Syrian people by voting in favour of the draft resolution. History, and future Syrian generations, would judge them harshly if they chose not to do so.

17. In closing, he proposed that, in paragraph 43 of the draft resolution, the words "halt the arbitrary detention of individuals and" should be inserted after the word "immediately". He also proposed that paragraph 47, which was identical to paragraph 39, should be deleted.

18. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Comoros, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (the Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Sweden,

Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Yemen had joined the sponsors. He took note of the request made by Saudi Arabia for a correction and revision of the draft resolution.

19. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that he congratulated the representative of Saudi Arabia on the fact that Israel had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, thereby revealing the secret alliance between those two States. He also noted that Samantha Power, the former Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, had that same day expressed her view that the United States should have long ago ended support for a Saudi-led coalition that, in addition to killing thousands of civilians, was now starving people.

20. In an interview broadcast recently by Qatari State-sponsored television, the former Prime Minister of Qatar had admitted that his country and Saudi Arabia had together spent some $137 billion to destroy Syria through terrorism. The sponsors of the draft resolution had also spent exorbitant sums to destroy Yemen, Iraq, Libya and other countries. The Saudi regime was using its vast wealth to sponsor, finance and promote terrorism and destroy the reputation of Arabs and Muslims around the world.

21. The draft resolution was sponsored by a group of countries that were politicizing the noble cause of promoting human rights. They were supporting terrorism, fomenting strife, occupying land and destroying States, without the slightest respect for the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. The main sponsors were allies who conspired against one another, but worked together to sponsor international terrorism, besmirching the image of Arabs and Muslims and wreaking destruction in Syria and many other countries. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report entitled "Raqqa's dirty secret" provided one example of the hypocrisy and mendacity of those States. The so-called international coalition led by the United States of America had struck a bargain with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to evacuate thousands of ISIL fighters and transfer them to areas controlled by the Syrian army and its allies, in order to impede the liberation of Syrian territory from the terrorism supported by the Governments that were sponsoring the draft resolution. How could human rights be entrusted to such Governments?

22. It was absurd for the Saudi delegation to introduce a draft resolution concerning the situation of human rights in any country. The Al-Saud kings and princes believed that they could pervert the Charter, support terrorism and impose the rule of force and corruption on all. It would be shameful and scandalous for the Organization to give in to Saudi coercion and remain silent about the crimes of the Saudi regime, which was killing thousands of innocent civilians in Yemen and destroying that country. Saudi Arabia was the most dangerous dictatorship on the face of the Earth, using money and perverting religious values to oppress its people and support terrorism throughout the world.

23. The draft resolution reflected the hysteria and political impotence of the Saudi regime and its allies, supporters and sponsors in the face of the defeat of their Wahhabist terrorist project in Syria. The Saudi and Qatari regimes differed on everything except on continuing their support for terrorism and destroying Syria. They competed with each other in their claims to be the source of the Wahhabist extremist ideology, which was the root of their ongoing conflict.

24. The dictatorial theocratic Saudi regime had an appalling record of abusing the human and legal rights of its nationals and migrant workers. It was laughable that the regime now boasted that Saudi Arabian women would soon be allowed to drive, provided that they returned home before sunset.

25. Saudi Arabian Wahhabism was a fourth type of weapon of mass destruction, with a destructive power that exceeded that of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons combined. That extremist religious ideology had produced many victims of acts of terrorism, in countries that included Afghanistan, Belgium, France, Iraq, Libya and the United States of America.

26. The Turkish regime had played a role by helping to displace millions of Syrians, and had also used them as political bargaining chips with the European Union, sending them to drown in the Mediterranean Sea. That same regime had opened its border to tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters, who, according to the reports of the Security Council Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, were nationals of more than 100 countries. Some of those terrorists had crossed the Turkish border carrying chemical weapons that had been brought from Libya to Syria with the assistance of the Turkish authorities. Those facts had been documented by independent news organizations and supported by statements made by Turkish legislators in the Turkish parliament.

27. If the Syrian people had waited for the United Nations to protect it from the terrorists, they would never have defeated ISIL and the Nusrah Front. As representatives prepared to vote on the draft resolution,

they should recall that the Syrian people and army, along with their allied forces, were fighting heroic battles in a savage war against international terrorism that was supported by the sponsors of the draft resolution. Syria was fighting that war on behalf of all States.

28. The deviant Saudi-Qatari ideology ignored the principled position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that rejected all country-specific resolutions concerning human rights situations. Member States should vote against the draft resolution, in order to prevent the terrorists and their sponsors from once again attacking the Syrian people and the stability of Syria.

29. **Ms. Sison** (United States of America) said that her delegation strongly supported the draft resolution and called on all countries to vote in favour of it. Her Government welcomed the strong condemnation of the continued violations and abuses of human rights and of all violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Syrian Government and its allies. The Syrian Government remained responsible for the vast majority of the death and destruction inflicted on the Syrian people. The draft resolution rightly called attention to the reporting by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic on the human rights violations and abuses.

30. With regard to the recent and unconscionable attack on Khan Shaykhun, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism had confirmed that chemical weapons had been used. It was the fourth time that the Mechanism had confirmed the use of such weapons by the Assad regime. That fact underscored the brutal and horrifying barbarism of that regime and made the protection provided by Russia even more egregious.

31. The United States denounced in the strongest possible terms all such heinous acts, and reiterated its call for accountability and for a political solution to the conflict, which could be reached by an inclusive process owned and led by the Syrian people, as called for in Security Council resolution 2254 and the Action Group for Syria Final Communiqué (Geneva communiqué).

32. **Mr. Wenaweser** (Liechtenstein), speaking also on behalf of Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand and Norway, said that they welcomed the emphasis that the draft resolution had placed on the need for accountability for all of the well-documented abhorrent crimes, which were serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and some of which might constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.

33. It was important that such offences did not go unpunished and that the perpetrators were held accountable, irrespective of their affiliation. The delegations reiterated their call for the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. However, in the absence of such a referral owing to political deadlock, it was necessary to explore all avenues that could lead to closing the impunity gap.

34. The delegations welcomed the contributions of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, as well as the support extended to it through the draft resolution under consideration.

35. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the brave young man Mohsen Hojaji, who had been captured in Syria by ISIL and subsequently beheaded in front of the camera, and many others like him were the true fighters against extremism and terrorism. The blood of those comrades was on the hands of the people who had ideologically, financially and logistically supported ISIL and other terror groups in Syria and the rest of the Middle East. Those sponsors had even provided their subordinates with psychedelic drugs so that they could supposedly taste paradise while beheading Muslims and Christians in cold blood, raping Yazidi girls, burning prisoners alive and bombing crowded mosques and churches.

36. It was utterly absurd that the main sponsors of the draft resolution were also among the main sponsors of the most radical terrorist groups in Syria. It was absurd that they were regularly and shamelessly abusing the platform of the Committee to cleanse themselves of their crimes. Many people outside of the United Nations wondered how the Organization could condemn terrorists while simultaneously condemning those who fought against them.

37. As defeat loomed for groups such as ISIL in Syria, their mentors were becoming more and more worried about the thousands of their citizens fighting in the ranks of such groups as well as the billions of dollars they had spent to destabilize Governments in the region, which now seemed to be a lost investment. The incongruous accusations and condemnations laid out in the draft resolution, and particularly in its operative paragraph 28, reflected the resulting anger and hopelessness.

38. He advised other delegations that their votes on the draft resolution could be interpreted to mean they that were abetting terrorists and their allies or supporting those who fought against them on the ground. Regardless of the result of the vote, neither the draft

resolution nor its sponsors would decide the outcome of the battle. The people of Syria and the Syrian army would ultimately determine the outcome by defeating terrorists and their allies, in particular Saudi Arabia. Brave people like Mr. Hojaji would continue to stand with the people and Government of Syria in their legitimate fight against terrorism.

39. **Ms. Yalçın** (Turkey) said that the violent oppression by the Syrian regime of the democratic aspirations and legitimate demands of its people continued to threaten regional and international peace and security, and the human rights situation was deteriorating day by day. The regime had employed all instruments of violence in order to remain in power, and had punished the people brutally with chemical weapons, barrel bombs, ballistic missiles, targeted attacks on civilians, demographic change, sexual violence, arbitrary detentions, torture, starvation and sieges. The persistent lies of the representatives of the regime did not change the well-documented reality, and her delegation would not respond to the bogus allegations made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. The adoption of the draft resolution could not compensate for the immense suffering of the Syrian people, but it would demonstrate once again that the international community, including Turkey, stood with them in the pursuit of accountability.

40. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country maintained its principled position of rejecting country-specific human rights resolutions, as such selectivity was politically motivated and a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. The repeated adoption of such country-specific resolutions went beyond the purview of the Committee and was a breach of the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity. Dialogue with concerned States was the only effective way to promote and protect human rights. His delegation believed that human rights issues should be examined within the context of the universal periodic review and called on countries to build on the progress made since the creation of the Human Rights Council. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

41. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria continued to cause indescribable suffering for the Syrian people. The international community had a legal and moral duty to end all violations of human rights in Syria, including, in particular, those perpetrated by the Syrian regime and the terrorist group ISIL. It must, moreover, emphasize the need to abide by international humanitarian law and halt all attacks on civilians and civilian sites. The international community must also underscore its determination to prosecute those responsible for the most serious crimes perpetrated against Syrian civilians. Her delegation therefore urged all States to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

42. **Mr. Lauber** (Switzerland) said that his delegation was extremely concerned by the violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the armed conflict in Syria. Although Switzerland had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, it regretted that paragraphs 2, 12, 21, 22 and 28 weakened the broader applicability of the text.

43. Given the systematic and recurring nature of the violations, it was crucial to shed light on them and their perpetrators. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic must have access to the territory of the country, and the pursuit of the alleged responsible parties should be conducted at the national, regional or international level in order to prosecute them for the most serious violations of international law. For those reasons his delegation reiterated its long-standing call to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court, and also called on Member States to support the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

44. **Mr. Ri** Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation reiterated its principled position rejecting all country-specific resolutions. Human rights situations in individual countries must be discussed and resolved in an atmosphere of constructive dialogue and cooperation, while respecting national sovereignty. The universal periodic review mechanism, in which all countries were treated equally, was the appropriate forum for the discussion of human rights issues. His delegation would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

45. **Ms. Mozolina** (Russian Federation) said that her delegation would vote against the draft resolution as part of its effort to keep the Committee from being used to rubber-stamp country-specific resolutions for the sole purpose of exerting political pressure on an individual Member State. The draft resolution was a case in point. It did not reflect the tremendous progress that Syria had made in fighting terrorism and ridding its land of fighters. Rather than help to stabilize the situation in Syria, the adoption of the draft resolution would undermine international efforts to settle the conflict there, including through the peace talks in Astana.

46. Recent events in the Middle East had made it abundantly clear that geopolitical games aimed at bringing about regime change had serious consequences. The time had come to stop those games and to stop the information war against the Syrian Government and those Governments, including her own, that had come to its assistance. Terrorism had manifested itself in some form in nearly all countries, making such assistance justified and lawful. Those who were helping Syria in its fight against terrorism, rather than those who were aiding terrorist organizations, were on the right side of history.

47. Country-specific resolutions on human rights that drew on fabricated information and fake news discredited the entire United Nations human rights system. States that wished the situation in Syria to improve should vote against the draft resolution.

48. **Mr. De Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution owing to its serious concerns about the grave human rights violations and abuses occurring in Syria. Nevertheless, his delegation also understood that the draft resolution remained unbalanced and did not recognize the responsibilities of all parties directly or indirectly involved in the conflict.

49. It was of paramount importance that the draft resolution was based on an objective, impartial and fact-based assessment of the situation on the ground. The draft resolution failed to contribute to a political solution to the conflict. It was high time to find common ground, provide remedies to victims, and hold perpetrators accountable through an inclusive solution, led by the Syrian people, that was non-discriminatory and fully respected human rights and fundamental human freedoms.

50. **Ms. Velichko** (Belarus) said that country-specific agenda items and resolutions stood in the way of constructive dialogue. The universal periodic review mechanism provided a means for balanced consideration of the human rights situation in every country and was the most effective way to encourage Governments to address existing human rights challenges. Belarus would vote against the draft resolution.

51. **Mr. Quintanilla Román** (Cuba) said that his country would vote against the draft resolution, which fostered a punitive approach rather than considering the interests of the country concerned. A political solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, taking into account the interests and aspirations of the Syrian people, could not be achieved through resolutions that undermined the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country in question. A peaceful and negotiated solution was required, and the Committee should foster such cooperation with full respect for the country's sovereignty. The international community must abandon politicized and selective practices, which only hindered the prospect of a peaceful solution in the country concerned.

52. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.54.*

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen.

Against:

Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Philippines, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya,

Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Tajikistan, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zambia.

53. *Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.54, as orally corrected and revised, was adopted by 108 votes to 17, with 57 abstentions.*

54. **Mr. Moussa** (Egypt) said that his country continued to follow developments in Syria with deep concern. It was regrettable that the Committee's consideration of draft resolutions on the human rights situation in the Syrian Arab Republic had become routine, yet the adoption of those resolutions had no impact on the situation of human rights on the ground in that country. Since 2011, Egypt had rejected all resolutions proposed under the current agenda item that were rejected by the country concerned; Egypt's decision to abstain on the vote on the draft resolution stemmed from its awareness of the complexity of the crisis in Syria, the involvement of multiple stakeholders in that crisis, and its repercussions for the entire Middle East region. As adopted, the draft resolution lacked balance. Egypt had been disappointed that a more comprehensive, non-politicized draft resolution that focused on ways to promote and protect human rights in Syria had not been proposed. In line with its well-known position, Egypt rejected the references made in the draft resolution to the International Criminal Court, and also rejected the reference to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/248.

55. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Turkish representative seemed to be unaware of the extent of her country's involvement in Syria. In 2013, a known terrorist in the service of the Turkish intelligence services had transported two litres of sarin from Libya to Istanbul on a civilian flight. Turkish intelligence had facilitated the entry into Syria of that individual, and the sarin had then been used in a chemical weapon attack on the town of Khan al-Asal, near Aleppo, in March 2013 and in other attacks in Syria. Mere hours after the Khan al-Asal attack, the Syrian representative had met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and asked for assistance in identifying the perpetrators. However, after meeting with influential members of the Security Council, the Secretary-General had informed the representative that, while assistance could be provided to the Syrian Government to ascertain whether chemical weapons had, in fact, been used in the attack on Khan al-Asal, the Secretary-General would be unable to provide any assistance to help identify the perpetrators.

56. From the time when the attack had occurred, Syria had understood clearly that a decision had been taken that the perpetrators would not be identified. Indeed, certain influential States and the corrupt regimes of Saudi Arabia and Qatar had successfully derailed the work of the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism

57. He wondered how the representative of Qatar dared to speak of the human rights situation in other countries. Qatar was a small State that had no constitution or electoral system, a tribe whose members turned and plotted against one another. Meanwhile, the ruling family appropriated the country's resources and used them to support terrorism or to satisfy the whims of its princes and sheikhs. It brought in thousands of migrant workers to work in slavery-like conditions. The Qatari poet Mohammad al-Ajami had been sentenced to life imprisonment for writing a poem in which he had criticized the lack of freedoms in the country. The Qatari regime had even conspired with the Nusrah Front and ISIL to abduct United Nations Disengagement Observer Force peacekeepers in the occupied Syrian Golan.

58. As for the Saudi regime, it prohibited the building of non-Muslim houses of worship for migrant workers and foreign residents and prohibited the burial of non-Muslims on Saudi soil. It also issued fatwas that were not fit to be heard by Arabs and Muslims, or by the Committee. Qatar and Saudi Arabia competed with each other in their claims to be the origin of the criminal ideology known as Wahhabism and the greatest supporter of terrorism.

59. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that his Government had consistently advocated the resolution of human rights disputes through constructive dialogue and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect. China opposed the politicization of such issues and their use as a means of exerting pressure on countries, and opposed country-specific resolutions on human rights. His delegation had therefore voted against the draft resolution.

60. **Ms. Dagher** (Lebanon) said that, since the start of the Syrian conflict, her country had pursued a policy of maintaining its distance, in order to safeguard its unity and stability. In keeping with that policy, her delegation had once again abstained from voting on the draft resolution.

61. **Mr. González Serafini** (Argentina) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution. Argentina was gravely concerned by the humanitarian situation in Syria and condemned the human rights abuses and acts of violence perpetrated against the civilian population. Political dialogue between the parties was the only legitimate and realistic means of achieving peace and putting an end to the violence, and significant progress had been made in the negotiations in Geneva and Astana.

62. Argentina strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Those responsible must be held to account and his Government supported the efforts to conduct an independent investigation within the framework of OPCW. Furthermore, supplying arms and funds to the parties to conflict would only exacerbate the suffering of the Syrian people. As his Government had stated on many occasions, including as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, the situation in Syria should be referred to the International Criminal Court.

63. Argentina reiterated its willingness to receive Syrian refugees and its commitment to strengthen its humanitarian visa programme for those affected by the conflict in Syria. His Government had provided support on the ground in the form of a White Helmets humanitarian mission.

64. **Mr. García Paz y Miño** (Ecuador), expressing concern at the deteriorating human rights situation in Syria and at the use of chemical weapons, said that his delegation condemned the human rights violations and wished to express its solidarity with the Syrian people. The principle of non-interference in the affairs of other States had not been respected and the violence had escalated, weakening the Syrian State and enabling terrorist organizations to grow stronger.

65. Ecuador was concerned that the draft resolution did not take all parties into consideration. There was no mention of other insurgent groups, especially those financed by other States, which also bore some responsibility, and the text did not contribute to a solution in which all Syrians could participate and peace would be restored.

66. Human rights situations must be addressed by the Human Rights Council, and specifically by the universal periodic review mechanism, since the draft resolution would serve only to politicize the situation. His delegation had therefore abstained from the voting.

67. **Ms. Ben Ategh** (Libya) said that her country rejected the unbalanced and politicized draft resolution. Furthermore, her Government categorically rejected the allegation made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic that the sarin used in chemical attacks on civilians in Syria had originated in Libya.

68. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on a point of order, said that his delegation wished to make a statement in explanation of vote after the vote. Prior to the vote, his delegation had made a general statement. Rule 128 of the rules of procedure seemed to be interpreted differently from year to year, since delegations had in the past been allowed to make both a general statement before the vote and a statement in explanation of vote after the vote, as reflected in the summary records of previous meetings.

69. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the long-standing practice of the Committee had been to allow sponsors of draft proposals to make a general statement, since rule 128 prohibited them from speaking in explanation of vote. According to rule 128, explanations of vote could be made either before or after a vote; using the same logic, he would suggest that general statements should also be made either before or after the voting. However, a delegation should not be permitted to make a general statement prior to a vote in addition to an explanation of vote after a vote, as that would be inconsistent with the rule and the Committee's practice.

70. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria), speaking on a point of order, said that any practice that contradicted the rule should not be accepted. The secretariat's interpretation was not the rule, and legal advice should be sought. He requested that further clarification be provided at the following meeting if it was not possible to do so during the current meeting.

71. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that his role was to offer procedural guidance; if the Committee was not satisfied, it could seek a formal legal opinion, but that request would need to be endorsed by the Committee as a whole. He had provided an explanation of the scope of rule 128 and clarification regarding the Committee's practice, which was to allow sponsors of draft proposals to make a general statement.

72. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on a point of order, said that the secretariat's explanation was not convincing. Both the rule and the practice were clear. The practice had been to allow Member States to make a general statement, while the rule allowed them to make an explanation of vote before or after a vote. The way that the Committee conducted its business should be clear prior to the meeting, so that delegations did not have to contend with a different interpretation of the rules every year. His delegation therefore requested that the long-standing practice of the Committee be respected.

Before making his general statement before the vote, he had informed secretariat staff that he would be making a general statement, because he wished to make an explanation of vote after the voting, basing that decision on the previous year's practice. Had he known about the new interpretation, he would have delivered his explanation of vote at the same time as his general statement.

73. **The Chair** said that, on an exceptional basis, and for the current meeting only, he would permit delegations that had already delivered a statement prior to the voting to make a second statement. However, he would seek further clarification on the matter.

74. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, as far as the secretariat was concerned, the interpretation of rule 128 had not evolved over time, nor had the practice. From time to time, a single delegation had inadvertently been permitted to make two statements when according to the rules and practice of the Committee they should have made only one.

75. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the main sponsor of the draft resolution, Saudi Arabia, did not have the moral competence to lecture others on human rights, given its shameful human rights record at home and abroad. Paragraph 28 of the draft resolution lumped together, falsely labelled and condemned the very people who were fighting terrorism in Syria, in what was nothing more than an act of revenge against the forces that had been most effective in combating terrorism and violent extremism on the ground. The wording of the paragraph amounted to a reward for violent extremism and terrorism as well as their supporters, who had nurtured them with Takfiri ideologies and provided them with financial and logistical resources. The two Iranian forces mentioned in paragraph 28 were part of the regular armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and were deployed in Syria on an exclusively advisory basis at the formal invitation of that Government to fight the terrorist onslaught in Syria. Such mockery by those who had traditionally been the powerhouse of extremism and intolerance, when that intolerance was, in turn, the main source of violent extremism and terrorism, was repulsive. The draft resolution would not dissuade his country from combating violent extremism and terrorism, and it was determined to continue fighting to rid the region of terrorists who sowed fear and exported it to the entire world.

76. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia) thanked all Member States that had voted in support of the draft resolution. As expected, the Syrian representative had declined to say one word about his country's appalling human rights record and had, instead, made baseless allegations about Saudi Arabia and the other sponsors. However, the numerous errors regarding Saudi Arabia that he had made in his speech betrayed his profound ignorance of that country and its rulers. As for the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he should remember that his country continued to persecute its Sunni Ahwazi Arab minority and was responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths. He had also contradicted himself by claiming that the Iranian forces in Syria were there only on an advisory basis, while also claiming that those forces were in Syria to fight terrorism. The international community was well aware of the terrorism and killings perpetrated by Iran; the adoption of the draft resolution established a legitimate basis for dealing with that country and its allies.

77. **Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that the adoption of the draft resolution made clear that the international community would not remain silent in the face of the serious human rights violations in Syria, which were an affront to the conscience of humanity. The efforts of the Syrian representative would not deter Qatar from shouldering its legal and moral responsibility with respect to the situation of human rights in Syria. Qatar reiterated its support for the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for freedom, dignity and self-determination, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

78. **Mr. Saito** (Japan), welcoming the adoption of the draft resolution, said that his delegation was gravely concerned by the human rights situation in Syria, which had deteriorated severely and where civilians suffered indiscriminate attacks. He condemned in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons and said that it was the responsibility of the international community and all of humanity to ensure that those responsible were held to account. Fact-finding and accountability processes relating to the use of chemical weapons in Syria had yet to be completed and the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism should be renewed. With regard to paragraph 28, it was important to remain objective in draft resolutions and not to lose sight of their original aims or make them overly politicized.

79. **Ms. Lind** (Estonia), speaking on behalf of the States Members of the European Union; the candidate countries Albania and Montenegro; and in addition, Ukraine, said that the European Union was appalled by the grave human rights violations in Syria. It condemned the systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict, particularly the Syrian regime and its allies,

and called for an immediate end to attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The European Union condemned in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons and the atrocities committed by ISIL and other United Nations-designated terrorist groups, and reaffirmed its strong commitment to defeating them.

80. All those responsible for breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law, some of which might constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity, must be brought to justice. Impunity for such crimes was unacceptable and the European Union would continue to support efforts to gather evidence for future legal action. The European Union renewed its call for the Security Council to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

81. The European Union strongly supported the efforts of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, and encouraged the two bodies to cooperate further. It also urged the Syrian regime to cooperate with those mechanisms and to grant them unhindered access to the country.

82. The Syrian regime's appalling use of sarin nerve agent in Khan Shaykhun had resulted in the deaths of at least 80 people. The use of chemical weapons by anyone, whether State or non-State actors, was contrary to international law. The European Union fully supported the work of OPCW and United Nations investigators and urged the Security Council to maintain the investigative capacity of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism.

83. The primary purpose of the draft resolution was to urge respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, including the protection of all civilians. Human rights resolutions must remain objective and not become politicized. The dire human rights and humanitarian situation in Syria deserved a resolution with broad support, and the European Union was concerned that the list in paragraph 28 of foreign forces supporting the Syrian authorities might detract from that. The common objective was to advance the political track under United Nations auspices, which was the only way to bring peace to Syria and put an end to the suffering of the Syrian people. There could be no military solution to the conflict.

84. Strong commitment to democracy and inclusive government was the only way to ensure lasting respect for human rights. The States members of the European Union were committed to ensuring a peaceful transition, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva communiqué. Only once an inclusive political transition was firmly under way would the European Union be able to assist with the reconstruction of the country both directly and through international organizations, which would enable the millions of Syrians who had been forced to flee their homes to return and live in peace and security.

85. **Ms. Yalçın** (Turkey) said that her delegation welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution but rejected in their entirety the allegations made by the Syrian Arab Republic regarding Turkey. They were spurious allegations made by a regime that had lost its legitimacy a long time previously. The overwhelming support shown for the draft resolution spoke for itself.

86. **The Chair** said that, on an exceptional basis, he had allowed delegations to make two statements under the present agenda item. However, his position in future would be that, pursuant to rule 128 and the Committee's practice, whenever a vote was announced, delegations might make only one statement, either before or after the vote, regardless of whether it was a general statement or an explanation of vote.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.

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Chair: Mr. Gunnarsson ..... (Iceland)

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(a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 72: Promotion and protection of human rights (*continued*)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/C.3/72/L.48 and A/C.3/72/L.69)

Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.48: Situation of human rights in Myanmar

1. **The Chair** drew attention to the statement of programme budget implications contained in document A/C.3/72/L.69.

2. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), speaking on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and introducing draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.48, said that a disgraceful scene played out in Myanmar, where the Muslim Rohingya minority were being expelled from the country. Their cultural rights were violated, their villages were set ablaze and they were driven into Bangladesh or even into the sea.

3. The Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation were deeply concerned about the escalation of violence against the Rohingya and the violations of international human rights law by the authorities. In the wake of massacres, one side had called the other "cockroaches" and blatantly denied their humanity. The draft resolution underscored the importance of a peaceful and sustainable solution based on recognition of the citizenship rights of the Muslims of Myanmar and their right to return to their homes. It called for the cessation of military operations against the Rohingya and the free flow of humanitarian assistance, and urged the authorities of Myanmar to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. Bangladesh, which had received tens of thousands of refugees from Myanmar, should be thanked and supported.

4. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Andorra, Angola, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America had joined the sponsors.

5. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking on a point of order, said that the authors of the draft resolution had not consulted his delegation prior to including his country in the list of sponsors as a State member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). He noted that his country no longer participated in the work of the OIC, and should be removed from the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

6. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Syrian Arab Republic would be removed from the list of sponsors, noting that the draft resolution was no longer deemed to have been submitted on behalf of all States members of the OIC. Unless he heard otherwise, all other members of the OIC remained as sponsors of the draft resolution.

7. **Mr. Moussa** (Egypt), speaking on a point of order, clarified that even without the Syrian Arab Republic as a sponsor, and notwithstanding that country's status vis-à-vis the OIC, the draft resolution continued to be presented on behalf of the OIC.

8. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking on a point of order, reiterated that the authors of the draft resolution had not consulted his delegation before including his country in the list of sponsors, although they had been aware that his country did not participate in the work of the OIC. His country was not a sponsor of the draft resolution. He reiterated his request to remove his country's name from the list of sponsors.

9. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that, as far as he was aware, the Syrian Arab Republic remained a State member of the OIC; therefore, the sponsorship procedure remained valid. The Syrian Arab Republic would be removed from the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

10. **Mr. Suan** (Myanmar) said that his country had requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution. Myanmar had consistently opposed politically motivated country-specific resolutions in the Third Committee, and upheld the principles of non-politicization, non-selectivity, objectivity, impartiality, and respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States in considering human rights situations. In addition, consideration of a country-specific human rights resolution within the General Assembly was procedurally unwarranted; instead, the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review was the most appropriate mechanism for addressing human rights situations.

11. He called for an end to the unfair and discriminatory treatment of his country by the Third Committee, which had subjected it to selective human rights scrutiny for a number of years, despite Myanmar's long-standing cooperation in good faith with the Human Rights Council.

12. He recalled that Myanmar, a nascent and fragile democratic nation struggling to overcome daunting challenges, including many chronic ones inherited from successive administrations, made a priority of the promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of its people. It was unafraid of human rights scrutiny, and would not accept coercive measures aimed at exerting political pressure under the guise of human rights.

13. The draft resolution under consideration was flawed, and based on one-sided accusations and false evidence, and used nomenclature that undermined his nation's sovereignty and was insulting to its people. It also failed to recognize his Government's relentless efforts to find a lasting solution to the human rights situation in Rakhine State.

14. He recalled that the primary cause of the recent humanitarian problem had been the unprovoked and premeditated terrorist attacks against police stations and a military base. The terrorist group of religious extremists behind the attacks, the so-called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army was led by a man who was not a native Muslim from Rakhine State, but born in Pakistan and raised in Saudi Arabia. According to a 2016 report of the International Crisis Group (ICG), that group was led by people living in Saudi Arabia and trained abroad. Its goal was to undermine the Government's efforts to resolve the problem of Rakhine State peacefully and sustainably.

15. Far from being indifferent to the situation, the Government of Myanmar had in fact made the plight of the peoples of Rakhine State a top priority, and taken bold steps in that regard, including through the establishment of a committee on peace, stability, and the development of Rakhine State, a new national verification process to address statelessness and citizenship, and the establishment of a committee to follow up on recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

16. He recalled the multi-ethnic nature of Myanmar, with 135 officially recognized ethnic groups with distinctive cultures and faiths, noting that steps had been taken to promote religious harmony and peace among various communities, including through interfaith groups and dialogues, outreach and combined prayer services for peace and national reconciliation throughout the country.

17. The situation in Rakhine State was not a religious matter, but the result of a complex combination of political, economic, and irregular migration issues stemming from British colonialism. That situation required a comprehensive and lasting solution which preserved the human rights of all communities without discrimination.

18. Myanmar took human rights violations in Rakhine State and other parts of the country seriously, and was committed to taking action against human rights violations and any other acts that undermined stability, harmony and the rule of law, in adherence to strict judicial norms. Myanmar authorities recognized the suffering of all those who had been affected by the conflict and forced to flee their homes, which, aside from the Muslims and Rakhines, also affected small minority groups including the Daing-net, Mro, Thet, Mramagyi and Hindu people.

19. Myanmar was working together with neighbouring Bangladesh to ensure the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of the those fleeing to Bangladesh in that context, including through plans for repatriation arrangements. It had also established a body to handle repatriation and the provision of humanitarian assistance, assist with resettlement and work towards establishing sustainable peace in the region. Myanmar was cooperating with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management and with United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, including the World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and assistance was being provided by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

20. Bringing the issues relating to Rakhine State before both the General Assembly and Security Council in parallel ran counter to the United Nations principle of avoiding duplication of efforts. Moreover, the matter was also being considered by the Human Rights Council. Some elements of the draft resolution, including the request for the appointment of a special envoy on Myanmar, were unnecessary and represented an additional budgetary strain on the Organization. He urged Member States to stand with the people of Myanmar by voting against the draft resolution.

21. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the situation of the refugees fleeing Myanmar, most of whom were women and children, was deplorable, and caused serious anguish among people of the world, irrespective of faith or nationality. Indiscriminate attacks against Muslims in Myanmar had resulted in significant loss of life and exacerbated

discrimination. The forcible displacement of the Rohingya from their homeland did not resolve the deep-seated crisis. The situation in Myanmar underscored once again that extremism created a breeding ground for the worst atrocities. Hence he called for an unequivocal end to the violence, and for ensuring humanitarian assistance and the safe, voluntary and dignified return of all forcibly displaced persons, and a peaceful and durable solution to the situation in Rakhine State. He hailed the generous offer by the people and Government of Bangladesh to provide shelter and support to the refugees.

22. He reiterated his country's principled position against country-specific resolutions, adding that the repeated abuse of the Third Committee for political purposes had hindered it from advancing human rights and addressing human rights violations. Accordingly, the Islamic Republic of Iran would not take part in the action on the draft resolution, a position which should not be construed as condoning the crimes and atrocities committed against Myanmar's Muslim minority.

23. **Ms. Simpson** (United States of America) said that her delegation was gravely concerned by widespread reports of atrocities being committed by Myanmar's security forces and those acting in concert with them, against the Rohingya in Rakhine State. Myanmar authorities must respect the rights of the country's entire population, provide unhindered humanitarian and media access throughout the country, especially in Rakhine State; ensure justice for victims and hold accountable the perpetrators of human rights violations and abuses; and ensure the safe and voluntary return of all persons to their places of origin. Indeed, those who had fled violence, terror and abuse in Rakhine State must be able to return to their own country and choose their residence. She thanked Bangladesh for its generosity in welcoming refugees in that context.

24. Her delegation welcomed the Myanmar Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, including with respect to access to citizenship and reform of its 1982 citizenship law, in order to create lasting peace. Myanmar's military and security forces must respect those commitments and assist the civilian Government in implementing rather than undermining them. Her Government was alarmed by the atmosphere of intolerance and hatred that prevailed in Myanmar toward the Rohingya and others, and called for a new narrative that did not empower radical, extremist, chauvinistic or violent agendas.

25. Her delegation was equally concerned by the numerous and ongoing reports of security forces committing human rights violations and abuses against individuals from ethnic and religious minorities in other parts of Myanmar, including Kachin and northern Shan States, and urged the Myanmar authorities to ensure access by the fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Council to all affected areas. Constitutional and security sector reform would be vital to implementing sustainable solutions to the many challenges facing the people of Myanmar. Her country would continue to support those efforts.

26. **Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh) said that his country had strived to provide shelter and life-saving assistance to the nearly 618,000 people who had fled Rakhine State since August, noting that another 4.000 people continued to cross the border into his country every week, and that more were waiting. Indeed, the Rohingya and others suffered systematic human rights violations, including sexual violence, and atrocity crimes in Rakhine State, while Myanmar security forces were being exonerated of any wrongdoing. Rohingya Muslims continued to be denied humanitarian assistance in northern Rakhine State; the Human Rights Council's fact-finding mission as well as the independent media were denied access to the area concerned.

27. Bangladesh would continue to work with local and international partners to address the specific needs and concerns of those forcibly displaced persons to the extent possible. His Government also remained committed to working in good faith with Myanmar authorities to develop appropriate modalities for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Rakhine State. He underscored the need for the Myanmar authorities to fulfil their commitments to that end, including on repatriation, a matter on which no notable progress had been made. In addition, while the memorandum of understanding between Bangladesh and Myanmar covered security and border management, it did not address issues of citizenship, the return of refugees or other rights. It was essential to address the deep-rooted discrimination that the Rohingya faced on the basis of ethnic and religious identity, so that a sustainable solution could be found and they could return to Rakhine State. Failing that, the road map recommended by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State would be ineffective. Extremist nationalism in Myanmar also had the potential to exacerbate tensions in other parts of the region and beyond. He called for support for a lasting solution to the crisis in Rakhine State, which was a matter of survival and ensuring respect for the basic human rights of the Rohingya. Support for the draft resolution would also give leverage to the United

Nations in speaking out and acting on what appeared to be a textbook example of ethnic cleansing.

28. **Mr. Begeç** (Turkey) said that his country was concerned that the disproportionate measures of the Myanmar armed forces had triggered a growing humanitarian tragedy for the Rohingya population. It appreciated the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh in addressing the crisis and stood ready to assist in efforts to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of all innocent people. His delegation supported the draft resolution in the hope that its implementation would contribute to the immediate end of the horrifying episode. It recalled the agreement made by member States of the OIC to support all efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis of the Rohingya population and urged the OIC community to support the draft resolution.

29. **Mr. Yusuf** (Somalia) said that, as a sponsor of the draft resolution, his country was disturbed by the human rights situation in Myanmar since the outbreak of violence in August 2017 in Rakhine State and condemned the gross human rights violations committed by Myanmar against the Rohingya people. It was deeply concerned by the plight of those hit by the crisis, given the serious difficulties encountered by international assistance groups in reaching them. Somalia called on the Government of Myanmar to halt its military operations and provide immediate, safe and unhindered access to United Nations agencies and all aid organizations.

30. **Mr. Moussa** (Egypt) said that his country was concerned about the violence, oppression and expulsions experienced by the Rohingya and other minorities in Rakhine State. His delegation believed that human rights in all countries should be promoted through constructive dialogue and international support for capacity building. The universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council allowed all countries to participate in constructive dialogue with a view to achieving shared human rights goals. While Egypt did not favour country-specific human rights resolutions, recent developments in Myanmar demanded exceptional measures. Egypt hoped that Myanmar would heed the calls of the international community for tangible improvements for the Rohingya so that such resolutions would not be necessary in the future.

Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting

31. **Mr. Yao** Shaojun (China) said that his Government had consistently advocated for disagreements to be resolved through constructive dialogue and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect. China opposed the politicization of human rights issues, the pressuring of countries on human rights issues, and country-specific human rights resolutions.

32. The issue of Rakhine State involved complex historical, ethnic and religious factors, and many disagreements and problems had accumulated over a long period of time. The Myanmar Government was making great efforts to alleviate the situation in Rakhine State, and local conditions were becoming more stable. The Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh were seeking solutions through negotiation and consultation, and his delegation appreciated the fact that Bangladesh, despite the challenges it faced, was striving to provide assistance to refugees entering the country. The United Nations and the international community should remain patient and assist Myanmar, not complicate the situation. For those reasons, China would vote against the draft resolution.

33. **Ms. Velichko** (Belarus) said that her country had always opposed the consideration of country-specific topics in the United Nations, as they undermined the principle of objectivity and increased confrontation. While sharing the concern of OIC member States with regard to the Rohingya refugee crisis, Belarus could not support a politicized and unconstructive country-specific resolution that was being used to exert pressure and did not contribute to a settlement of the current situation. A solution to the Rohingya problem should be reached through dialogue and cooperation among all interested sides. Belarus would vote against the draft resolution.

34. **Mr. Kashaev** (Russian Federation) said that his country understood the complexity of the situation of Muslim Rohingyas and other minorities in Myanmar. It noted the efforts of Bangladesh to host refugees and the need for the international community to provide assistance to them. Myanmar should not be criticized but rather be offered practical support to address the causes of the complex problem. Experience had shown that politicized, country-specific resolutions could neither resolve challenges, nor facilitate constructive dialogue. The Russian Federation had historically rejected and voted against country-specific resolutions of the Third Committee, which were contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. His delegation would therefore vote against the draft resolution.

35. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.48.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia.

Against:

Belarus, Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Philippines, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Antigua and Barbuda, Bhutan, Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Mongolia, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

36. *Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.48 was adopted by 135 votes to 10, with 26 abstentions.*

37. **Mr. Plasai** (Thailand) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on the draft resolution, as it had been commonly understood that the seventieth session of the General Assembly was the last session at which a resolution on that topic would be tabled. Thailand nevertheless recognized the necessity of resolving the current crisis in Rakhine State and commended Bangladesh for its tireless efforts to address the humanitarian challenges resulting from the crisis. It welcomed the expressed will of the Government of Myanmar to fulfil its commitment to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State in an expedited, coordinated and effective manner and the establishment of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State, which could be a critical factor in the successful resolution of the crisis. Thailand encouraged the Government of Myanmar to continue its efforts to improve the situation in Rakhine State and stood ready to support Myanmar in addressing current and future challenges.

38. **Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore) said that his country had always taken a consistent and principled approach against country-specific resolutions, as they were highly selective and often driven by political rather than human rights considerations, and had consistently abstained from voting on them. Its abstention from voting on the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar should not be interpreted as taking a position on the substance of the human rights issues raised therein.

39. The concerns of all parties should be given due attention in the draft resolution. Singapore welcomed the acknowledgement by the Government of Myanmar that it needed to address the complex and deep-seated issues in the country, including in Rakhine State. The establishment of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State was a positive step forward. The Government was laying the groundwork to resettle refugees through reconstruction projects and engagement with the Government of Bangladesh. While the responsibility to resolve the intercommunal and complex issues pertaining to the peoples of Rakhine State ultimately rested with all parties concerned in Myanmar, the international community could do its part by supporting efforts to work towards a viable solution. The immediate priority should be to alleviate suffering through humanitarian assistance. Singapore was ready to support the Government of Myanmar.

40. **Mr. Kafle** (Nepal) said that his country was deeply concerned by the humanitarian crisis caused by the influx of displaced persons from Rakhine State into

Bangladesh and commended the Government of Bangladesh for providing shelter and humanitarian assistance to the displaced population. It called upon the international community to continue to provide humanitarian assistance and upon all parties concerned to facilitate unhindered humanitarian access to the affected areas. It welcomed the readiness of Myanmar to resolve the issue, including by implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission. The outstanding issues in Rakhine State must be resolved through negotiation and dialogue in an inclusive spirit; resorting to violence from any side would only worsen the problem. Against that background, Nepal had abstained from voting on the draft resolution.

41. **Mr. Hoshino** (Japan) said that his country strongly condemned the attacks by armed groups against the Myanmar security forces in August 2017. It had called on the Government of Myanmar to restore security in a manner consistent with the rule of law and with full respect for human rights, while ensuring transparency. His Government commended the efforts of Bangladesh to receive displaced persons and resolve the current crisis through dialogue with the Government of Myanmar. While further fact-finding would be needed in Rakhine State, it would be effective only if conducted in a manner acceptable for the Government of Myanmar. The merit of appointing a new special envoy should be carefully considered, since there was already a Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. Japan welcomed the ongoing dialogue between Bangladesh and Myanmar and stressed that the international community should support those efforts.

42. Although his delegation had presented comments on the draft resolution in a constructive manner, those comments had not been fully reflected in the text. His delegation had therefore abstained from voting on the draft resolution.

43. Japan hoped that the Government of Myanmar would redouble its efforts in humanitarian assistance, the repatriation and resettlement of displaced persons, reconstruction and the alleviation of tension between communities. The implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State was critical for lasting peace and prosperity.

44. **Mr. Ri** Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his country was against all country-specific resolutions, as they were politicized, caused confrontation and were not favourable to constructive dialogue and cooperation to address human rights issues. His delegation had been absent during the vote on the draft resolution. It sincerely wished that the humanitarian problem could be solved quickly by the parties concerned through constructive dialogue and cooperation in line with the guiding principles of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

45. **Mr. González Serafini** (Argentina) said that his country had voted in favour of the draft resolution in the light of the reports of the fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council of murder, torture, violations, arson attacks and aerial attacks allegedly perpetrated against the Rohingya community and the displacement to Bangladesh of more than 600,000 Rohingyas since August 2017. Any stand taken on the issue should promote the full protection of and respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Rohingya population in Rakhine State and the strengthening of the transition to democracy in Myanmar, which would prevent further instability among that population.

46. **Ms. Cantada** (Philippines) said that her delegation had voted against the draft resolution. The Philippines was concerned by the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State and recognized that the issues were complex and intercommunal, with deep historical roots. It acknowledged the efforts of the Government of Myanmar to resolve the issues in Rakhine State, including the establishment of a ministerial-level committee to ensure the expeditious implementation of the recommendations of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and the ongoing bilateral collaboration with Bangladesh to resolve repatriation issues. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management was working closely with Myanmar on the distribution of relief goods to the affected communities. Her country urged Myanmar to faithfully implement the recommendations of the final report of the Advisory Commission and was committed to assisting it in that regard. It encouraged continued dialogue between Myanmar and Bangladesh to facilitate the repatriation of the affected population and to provide access to humanitarian relief without discrimination.

47. **Mr. Visonnavong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that, while understanding the concerns of the international community with regard to the developments in Myanmar, including in Rakhine State, his country also understood the complexity of the issue. It welcomed the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and the positive steps taken by the Government of Myanmar, in particular the creation of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State. The adoption of a country-specific resolution

would not help to improve the human rights situation in the country. Constructive dialogue with an understanding of the context and background of the complex issue would bring positive outcomes that were beneficial to all. Human rights issues should be addressed at the Human Rights Council and through the universal periodic review process. His delegation had therefore voted against the draft resolution.

48. **Mr. Ke** (Cambodia) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution. Resolutions on human rights issues should not target any particular country, as such issues were domestic affairs, and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States should be fully adhered to by all Member States. Human rights issues should be addressed and resolved by the Human Rights Council. With the full commitment and ongoing efforts of the Government of Myanmar, the situation in Rakhine State was improving. Cambodia urged Myanmar to work closely with the United Nations and other parties, in particular Bangladesh, to expeditiously address the humanitarian problems and was ready to provide support in those efforts.

49. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his delegation maintained its principled position of opposing country-specific human rights resolutions in the Third Committee, which was not the appropriate forum for addressing them, and did not contribute to the development of confidence-building measures between parties which faced a real or potential human rights situation.

50. It was up to States to guarantee the human rights of their citizens, in accordance with national legislation and international human rights law, respecting the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. It was only through genuine dialogue with the States concerned and through support from the international community, with priority given to regional and multilateral forums, that human rights could be promoted and protected sustainably and realistically, based on the principles of impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. It was hoped that the Government of Myanmar, neighbouring countries, the OIC and the international community as a whole could continue to work jointly and effectively towards that goal, including through diplomatic means such as the Secretary-General's efforts and the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State to address the complex historic causes for the conflict in Myanmar, and help alleviate tensions there. For those reasons, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had abstained from the vote.

51. **Mr. García Paz y Miño** (Ecuador) said that Ecuador was greatly concerned about the deterioration of the human rights situation in Myanmar, especially the serious acts of violence and disproportionate use of force against the Rohingya, and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation and the insecurity in affected areas.

52. His Government firmly condemned any human rights violations regardless of where they were committed and conveyed its solidarity with the Rohingya and other minorities affected by the conflict. Nevertheless, country-specific mandates did not help to improve the human rights situation in given countries. The Human Rights Council's universal periodic review was the appropriate mechanism for addressing human rights issues everywhere in the world, through its clear, impartial, non-politicized approach. Accordingly, his country had abstained from the vote. He called for Myanmar authorities to end the violence against the Rohingya, and comply with their international obligations regarding the promotion and protection of human rights and to displaced persons. Accountability of those responsible for human rights violations must be ensured.

53. **Ms. Pham** Anh Thi Kim (Viet Nam) said that, on the basis of its principled position, her country did not support country-specific resolutions and had therefore voted against the draft resolution. Viet Nam shared the concerns of the OIC countries and the international community over the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State, but was of the view that a more balanced draft resolution that better reflected the viewpoints of all concerned parties, in particular the Government of Myanmar, was needed. Given the complexity and deep historical roots of the issue, it was of great importance to find comprehensive, durable solutions to the situation in Rakhine State. Viet Nam called on all States and parties concerned to engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation and work towards mutually agreed solutions. It was ready to continue working closely with other ASEAN member States to assist the Government of Myanmar, deliver humanitarian assistance and promote peace, stability and development in Rakhine State.

54. **Mr. Jürgenson** (Estonia), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States; the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, said that the response of the European Union to the crisis in Myanmar had been set out in the conclusions adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 16 October 2017. The European Union reiterated its appreciation for the constructive role played by Bangladesh. It was committed to supporting the Government of Myanmar in implementing fully and swiftly the recommendations of the Advisory

Commission on Rakhine State and welcomed its positive steps since the elections in 2015, stressing that continued support for efforts to secure the democratic transition, peace, national reconciliation and socioeconomic development was vital. It was also vital to enable Rohingya refugees to make a sustainable return to Myanmar and to empower them, through access to full citizenship and related rights, to contribute to longer-term stability and harmony in the country. The European Union welcomed the commitments made by the Government of Myanmar to resolve the Rohingya crisis and underlined the need to implement those commitments as expeditiously as possible. Cooperation with international mechanisms and agencies designed to support Myanmar, including the fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, would help to instil confidence in that regard. Bringing to justice those who had committed unspeakable crimes was also indispensable to future peace and stability.

55. **Mr. Ajayi** (Nigeria) said that his country had always abstained on country-specific resolutions, because the universal periodic review was the most competent organ to resolve country-specific human right issues. However, in the specific instance under consideration, his Government had decided to join the consensus under the aegis of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation based on ample evidence on the ground and its concern for the thousands of people affected. While urging the Government of Myanmar to take immediate steps to improve the conditions of the Rohingya, his country commended Bangladesh for providing humanitarian aid to those displaced. Its position on the current vote did not in any way alter its traditional stance on country-specific resolutions.

56. **Mr. Habib** (Indonesia) said that his country had been fully engaged since the beginning of the Rohingya crisis. Indonesia condemned all acts of violence and hoped that all refugees would be able to return to their homes. Humanitarian access must be provided to all areas of northern Rakhine State. The resolution just adopted must be immediately implemented and should encourage the international community to prevent the situation from worsening. His Government also welcomed the initiative and willingness of the Government of Myanmar to engage with neighbouring countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for help in resolving the conflict.

57. The Rohingya refugees must be allowed to return voluntarily, safely and with dignity to their places of origin. The success of Myanmar was vital for peace and security in the region and its crisis should not be allowed to lead to a further disaster. The area must not become a breeding ground for transnational organized crime, and the Rohingya must not become victims of human trafficking or fall prey to radicalism and terrorism.

58. The resolution just approved would not suffice. It would be vital to rehabilitate and rebuild through a coordinated national programme. Indonesia stood ready to offer its expertise and experience in that regard.

59. **Ms. Cranfield** (Canada) said that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation had played an important role by presenting the draft resolution just adopted and that it had consulted widely on the text. Respect for diversity and inclusion required the rejection of discrimination, bigotry and intolerance, which were incompatible with the foundational values of the United Nations. Moreover, in the face of events that amounted to ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, the international community could not remain silent.

60. Her country believed that all Rohingya, without regard for religion or belief, should enjoy equal access to their civil and political rights, including access to a fair process for determining their citizenship. Canada remained deeply concerned by the violence in Rakhine State, including sexual violence and the displacement of more than 600.000 people into Bangladesh since the violent attacks of 25 August. To date in 2017, Canada had committed over $25 million to help address critical humanitarian needs in Myanmar and Bangladesh. In late October, it had launched the Myanmar Crisis Relief Fund, through which the Government of Canada would match donations by individual citizens.

61. Her Government urged the military and civilian authorities in Myanmar to make all possible efforts to end the violence, allow humanitarian assistance and fully implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

62. **Mr. Suan** (Myanmar) said that the draft resolution was ill-intentioned, selective and politically motivated and that it would not help his country's efforts to resolve the issues in Rakhine State. Instead, it would lead to further polarization and the escalation of tensions among different religious communities in Myanmar and beyond. The adoption of the resolution was also unfortunate for the Non-Aligned Movement, many of whose members had been sponsors. The delegation of Myanmar opposed attempts to infringe on its sovereignty by misusing the norms and procedures of the United Nations. The resolution just adopted had no moral authority; hence, his country would not be bound by it.

63. He thanked the delegations that had opposed the resolution, abstained or otherwise not participated in its adoption. His delegation also wished to recognize the efforts of certain delegations to depoliticize the issue and to make the draft resolution less subjective. The people of Myanmar would continue their efforts to build a peaceful, democratic, federal union that would enable all citizens to enjoy dignity, justice, equality and prosperity. His country would redouble its efforts to address the urgent humanitarian situation in Rakhine State and to prepare for the repatriation process with the assistance of the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and international partners. Democratic change did not happen overnight. The journey to democracy and development had just begun. No one could better understand the situation of Myanmar or desire peace and development more than its own people. The understanding and support of the international community was of critical importance to that young democracy in its period of transition. The Government of Myanmar would implement all its commitments, including the promotion and protection of the rights of its people in good faith and without fail.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

64. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was laughable that Canada had consulted Saudi Arabia on a country-specific resolution on human rights, particularly in view of the track record of Saudi Arabia on democracy and human rights. Saudi Arabia had expressed support for terrorists, secessionists and proponents of terrorist activity who had once been close allies of Saddam Hussein; while that came as no surprise, it should nonetheless give cause for alarm, especially given the terrible consequences that history had demonstrated could arise from showing indifference towards, or tacit support for, such despots. Few ideas could be more absurd than an attempt by Saudi Arabia to sell its divisive, fanatical and inherently sectarian takfirist ideology — one which, like an invasive species, was designed to eliminate all others — as a vision for the promotion of human rights. Through its Government, its corrupt and unelected royal family, its charities and the organisations that it supported, Saudi Arabia persisted in sponsoring terrorism worldwide. The Saudi Arabian mindset had produced not only Osama bin Laden but also 15 of the 19 hijackers that had perpetrated the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The country had also produced more suicide bombers operating in conflict zones since 2003, and supplied more foreign terrorist fighters to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) than any other country. ISIL even based its terrorist ideology on Saudi Arabian takfirist principles and used official Saudi Arabian textbooks in its schools. On another note, it was laughable for the international community to congratulate Saudi Arabia on the long overdue steps that it was taking to join the civilized world by finally permitting women to drive cars.

65. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia) said that the delegation of Iran was clearly still smarting from the scathing treatment it had received from the international community the previous day, and from witnessing the delegation of Saudi Arabia cooperate successfully with its allies in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation while Iran itself shied away from confrontation. It would seem that Iran, which had objected to the consultations held by Saudi Arabia on the draft resolutions just adopted, was unaware of the foundations of civilized international cooperation. While some might forgive Iran for its behaviour, history would not. The comments made by the Iranian delegation on terrorism were ludicrous given that Iran itself was the primary sponsor of terrorism in many countries all over the world; Iran had been behind the bombings in Argentina in 1992, as well as the bombing of the Khobar towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996 and of the United States marine barrack in Lebanon in 1983. The delegation of Iran was attempting to draw attention away from the terrorist activities it had carried out in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and elsewhere, and cowered away when it came to speaking about ISIL. No country had combated ISIL as fiercely as Saudi Arabia had done, both at home and abroad; Iran, on the other hand, provided terrorists with safe haven. The delegation of Saudi Arabia would not sink to the level of the ridiculous, ignorant and insulting comments made by the representative of Iran.

66. **Mr. Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, in spite of the lies told by the representative of Saudi Arabia, the facts spoke for themselves. The rigid and bigoted takfirist ideology that was relentlessly promoted by Saudi Arabia ran counter to the principles of pluralism, tolerance and openness and served as a breeding ground for mass atrocities, human rights violations and terrorism. Saudi Arabia must stop ridiculing international forums with its deceptive remarks which made a mockery of the very concepts of human rights, justice and peace. While willing to grant citizenship to "Sophia" — not only a robot, but one without a male companion at that — Saudi Arabia continued its attempts to distract global attention from its own abhorrent human rights record. Rather than trying to justify its involvement in wars of aggression, acts of provocation, regional bullying and attempts to destabilize the region while absurdly blaming others — in particular Iran — for the outcomes,

it was time for Saudi Arabia to accept the consequences of its own poor choices.

67. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia) said that it was regrettable that the discourse of the representative of Iran had sunk to such a dismally unacceptable level; nonetheless, his delegation was obliged to respond by noting that the constitution of Iran was explicitly based on sectarian principles and shunned anyone who did not adhere to the principle of the guardianship of the Islamic jurist, which Iran strived to impose on the rest of the Islamic world. Iran did not know the meaning of tolerance, as demonstrated by its persecution of Ahwazi Arabs and Sunni Muslims and by the fact that there was not a single Sunni mosque in the whole of the country. Moreover, when the time had come to confront an issue of human rights, as in the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Myanmar (A/C.3/72/L.48), the representative of Iran had predictably fled the room; such behaviour was typical of the Government of Iran, a regime that demonstrated how courageous it was by using children as human shields in demining activities while the children of its own leaders were protected far from any such danger. As a genuine participant of the international community, Saudi Arabia would not respond to the spurious allegations made by a pariah State such as Iran.

68. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his Government was proud of its joint defence agreement with Iran and its relationship with the Russian Federation; those alliances had helped the Syrian Government to destroy Nusrah Front and ISIL, both of which were terrorist organizations supported by Saudi Arabia. In view of that triumph, it was natural for the representative of Saudi Arabia to retaliate by making accusations against the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the fact remained that even as long ago as the Battle of the Trench during the time of the Prophet Mohammed, Arabs and Muslims had received support from the Persians; any criticism of Arabs for receiving support from their Persian brethren was thus irrelevant and unjustified. His Government was grateful to the Iranian and Russian forces for their assistance in combating terrorism in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Agenda item 28: Advancement of women (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/C.3/72/L.22/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.22/Rev.1: Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas

69. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

70. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia), introducing the draft resolution, said that rural women and girls were central to achieving almost all the Sustainable Development Goals because of their crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of rural households and communities. The draft resolution was aimed at ensuring their full and equal engagement and their empowerment as prerequisites for sustainable development.

71. Women and girls in rural areas were particularly vulnerable to violence because of multidimensional poverty and lack of access to social care and protection services. The resolution urged Governments to eliminate all forms of violence against such women and to provide victims and survivors with protection and equal access to social, health and legal services.

72. Moreover, emphasizing the link between rural women's poverty and their lack of access to economic and productive resources, quality education and support services, the resolution encouraged Governments to develop and implement procurement policies and measures to enable rural women to benefit from public and private partnerships; to build facilities that provided safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments; and to promote the training, recruitment and retention of female teachers.

73. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Albania, Algeria, Angola, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (the Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, the Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malawi, Malta, Montenegro, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Yemen, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe had joined the sponsors.

74. *Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.1/Rev.1 was adopted.*

75. **Ms. Simpson** (United States of America) said that her country believed that women should have equal access to health care and remained committed to the principles of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on

Women and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. However, there was international consensus that those documents did not create new international rights, including any right to abortion. The United States fully supported the principle of voluntary choice regarding maternal and child health and family planning, but her country did not recognize abortion as a method of family planning, nor did it support abortion in its reproductive health assistance.

76. The United States was the world's largest donor of bilateral reproductive health and family planning assistance. It was important to help ensure that women and girls in rural areas had greater opportunities to pursue and complete a quality education. Her country believed that any reaffirmation of prior documents applied only to those States that affirmed them initially and, with respect to international treaties and conventions, to States parties to such agreements.

77. **Mr. Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that rural women were rightly celebrated as agents for sustainable development because of their wisdom and knowledge. With a population of 13.4 million rural women, Mexico attached the highest importance to making such women more visible as participants in key social processes and to fully recognizing their human rights under its national norms, in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

78. His country viewed with alarm the serious resistance that had arisen during substantive discussions on the status of women during the current session of the General Assembly, in particular with regard to the wording of the draft resolution just adopted. Resistance to strengthening language that had been agreed over decades of work seriously undermined the value of multilateralism and was of great concern in advance of the forthcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women and its priority theme, namely, challenges and opportunities in achieving gender quality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.

79. The delegation of Mexico was also worried by the failure to specifically recognize the multiple, intersectoral forms of discrimination that affected rural women and girls, which it viewed as a threat to the universality of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The draft resolution just adopted would be of little use if it did not recognize the main challenges and obstacles facing rural women and girls beyond their rural context, including not only their gender but such factors as age, ethnic origin, migratory status and disability, inter alia. By referring only once to women's human rights, the text of the resolution did not address the full spectrum of opportunities for rural women and girls to realize all their human rights.

80. Moreover, the absence of any mention of sexual rights in the draft resolution proved that, at the international level, there was still a long road ahead in order to guarantee women full autonomy over their bodies. His Government believed that decisions on sexuality and reproduction were matters that transcended the realm of health; because they entailed the personal empowerment of women as well as men, society and above all Governments should not interfere in them.

81. Despite its objections, Mexico had joined the consensus on the resolution because of its commitment to multilateralism and its clear belief that the text did not constitute a limit to the discussions and agreements that could be reached in the framework of the upcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women. His Government called on all delegations to weigh the importance of the issues it had raised and to heed its national motto with respect to the rights of women: "Equality: no more, no less."

Agenda item 64: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (*continued*) (A/C.3/72/L.60)

Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.60: Enlargement of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

82. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

83. **Ms. Ntaba** (Zimbabwe), introducing the draft resolution, said that Zimbabwe wished to be admitted as a member of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in order to enhance its engagement with regard to refugees. Zimbabwe had acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in 1981, one year after independence, and had been party to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons since 1998. Over the years, it had taken practical steps to demonstrate its commitment to issues relating to refugees, notably by accommodating refugees from the African region: it currently hosted many refugees in the Tongogara camp and assisted an estimated 3,000 refugees who had recently crossed into the country. It was also a State party to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa.

84. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Comoros, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Timor-Leste and Uganda had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

85. *Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.60 was adopted.*

Agenda item 70: Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance *(continued)*

(a) Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (*continued*) (A/C.3/72/L.56/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.56/Rev.1: Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

86. **Mr. Kashaev** (Russian Federation), introducing the draft resolution, said that the topic of the draft resolution had become very relevant in recent years, as doubt had increasingly been cast on the outcomes of the Nuremberg Tribunal. Victory in the Second World War had been crucial to forging a framework for the protection of human rights, which included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Such fundamental instruments had been the response of the United Nations to the crime of Nazism and policies violating human dignity. Incessant attempts to deny, revise or falsify history were not harmless academic exercises but upset the global order and blurred the principles of international law and security established after the Second World War.

87. The draft resolution highlighted current human rights concerns. The migration crisis, which had been triggered by the senseless policy of intervening in the domestic affairs of other sovereign States, had contributed to the emergence of racist and xenophobic discourse and calls to drive out immigrants and so-called foreign elements. Some countries were waging a war against monuments honouring those who had fought against Nazism, supported by legislative measures taken at the Government level; pro-Nazi marches and torch processions were being held, similar to gatherings which had taken place in Hitler's Germany; memorials had been unveiled to people who had perpetrated war crimes or crimes against humanity fighting alongside or in collaboration with Hitler's Germany; and streets, squares, schools and other public structures had been renamed in honour of Nazi collaborators. In Europe, including in some countries which had been occupied during the Second World War, those who had fought against the anti-Hitler coalition or had collaborated with the Nazis were being extolled as national heroes or champions of national liberation movements.

88. Sponsors of the draft resolution considered it reprehensible to glorify those involved in the crimes of Nazism and whitewash the crimes of former SS and Waffen SS members. Such fuelling of contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance was cause for grave concern. The actions in question were illegal under article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and incompatible with obligations of Member States under the Charter of the United Nations. The adoption of the draft resolution was a duty not only towards those who had founded the United Nations, but also towards the future generations they had sought to free from the horrors of war forever. The constructive participation and unshakeable support shown by Member States during the drafting process demonstrated the vital importance of the document to the Third Committee and the United Nations as a whole.

89. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Angola, Armenia, Burkina Faso Cambodia, Central African Republic, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Niger, Philippines, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone and South Africa had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

90. **Ms. Velichko** (Belarus), speaking on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), said that States members of CSTO fully supported the draft resolution. By failing to repulse neo-Nazism and attempting to appease aggressors, the international community was effectively endorsing the actions of the Third Reich. The Nuremberg Tribunal had enshrined in law the dismantlement of Nazism, which was a misanthropic ideology incompatible with respect for human rights. A key factor of the success of the Tribunal had been that States had remained unanimous throughout the process, which demonstrated that international justice should be the result of collective efforts towards strict observance of international law and impartiality.

91. CSTO member States strongly condemned attempts to rewrite history and the outcomes of the Second World War and called on the international community to counter dangerous trends to negate the conclusions of the Nuremberg Tribunal. The lessons of the Nuremberg Tribunal were as pertinent as ever, as

international justice was currently threatened by opposing power blocks, political prejudices and national egotism. Any attempts to glorify neo-Nazism and aggressive nationalism or to celebrate people who had committed atrocities in collaboration with the Nazis during the Second World War were abhorrent. All States must work together to combat neo-Nazism, chauvinism, other forms of xenophobia, hate speech and the popularization of radical nationalism, including among youth. Steps taken in some States, including at higher levels of Government, to destroy monuments to Soviet freedom fighters were disturbing, as were attempts to desecrate or demolish monuments to those who had fought against Nazism or to exhume or transfer their remains. States should comply with their international obligations in that respect, in particular, article 34 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I).

92. Member States had the responsibility to prevent intolerance and discrimination. The only way to save future generations from the ruin of new wars was through peaceful resolution of conflicts on the basis of respect for the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law.

93. **Ms. Simpson** (United States of America) said that her delegation wished to present 23 oral amendments to the draft resolution.

94. The fifth preambular paragraph and paragraphs 1, 7, 8, 9.11 and 39 should be deleted in their entirety.

95. In the second preambular paragraph, the words from "and its resolutions 61/149" to the end of the paragraph should be deleted.

96. In the ninth preambular paragraph, the words "and stressing in this regard that the victory over Nazism in the Second World War" should be deleted.

97. In paragraph 4, the words, ", as well as by declaring or attempting to declare such members and those who fought against the anti-Hitler coalition and collaborated with the Nazi movement participants in national liberation movements" should be deleted.

98. Paragraph 10 should be replaced in its entirety by the words "Emphasizes that commemorative celebration of the Nazi regime, its allies, and related organizations do injustice to the memory of the countless victims of the Second World War and negatively influence children and young people".

99. In paragraph 14, the words "and that they may fall within the scope of article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and may be subject to certain restrictions, as set out in articles 19, 21 and 22 of the Covenant" should be deleted.

100. Paragraph 15 should be replaced in its entirety by the words "Encourages States to take concrete measures, including legislative and educational ones, in order to combat the denial of the crimes against humanity and war crimes committed during the Second World War".

101. In paragraph 17, the words "measures, including legislative, law enforcement and" should be deleted.

102. In paragraph 20, the words from ", in particular those committed" to the end of the paragraph should be deleted.

103. In paragraph 25, the words "racist and xenophobic violence" should be replaced by the words "imminent violence".

104. Paragraph 31 should be replaced in its entirety by the words "Notes measures taken by States to prevent discrimination against, in particular but not limited to, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, people of African descent, Roma, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and to ensure their integration into society, and urges States to ensure the full and effective implementation of legal, policy and institutional measures protecting these individuals and groups, and recommends that States effectively guarantee to these individuals and groups, without discrimination of any kind, their human rights, as well as the prosecution and adequate punishment of those responsible for racist and xenophobic crimes against them".

105. In paragraph 32, the word "extremism" should be replaced by the word "racism" and the word "must" should be replaced by the word "should".

106. Paragraph 35 should be replaced in its entirety by the words "Emphasizes the importance of history classes in teaching the dramatic events including the Holocaust and the Holodomor (1932–33) and human suffering which resulted from totalitarian ideologies, including Nazism and Fascism".

107. Paragraph 38 and its subparagraphs should be replaced in their entirety by the words "Calls on States to condemn all propaganda and all organizations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to counter all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and with due regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention, to not permit public

authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination".

108. Paragraph 41 should be replaced in its entirety by the words "Expresses concern about the increased use of the Internet to promote and disseminate racism, racial hatred, xenophobia, racial discrimination, Anti-Semitism and related intolerance, and in this regard calls upon States parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to counter the dissemination of the above-mentioned Ideas while respecting their obligations under article 19 of the Covenant, which guarantees the right to freedom of expression".

109. A new paragraph should be inserted between paragraphs 41 and 42 which read "Calls upon States to adopt measures to strengthen freedom of expression, which plays a crucial role in promoting democracy and combating racist and xenophobic ideologies based on racial superiority".

110. In paragraph 50, the words "and encourages him to pay specific-attention to paragraphs 4, 9, 10, 11. 13, 18, 19, 34 and 35 above," should be deleted.

111. **Mr. Kashaev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation appreciated the attention that the United States delegation had finally paid to the draft resolution, although it could not agree with the proposed amendments. The draft resolution had been crafted during a series of open and informal consultations and bilateral meetings. The United States delegation had unfortunately not attended those discussions, although if it had, it would have witnessed the broad participation of all stakeholders. The amendments which it had submitted extremely late in the process were openly provocative since they sought to fundamentally change the essence and character of an initiative traditionally supported by the majority of Member States, in particular by removing references to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

112. Over the years, some delegations had tried to convince the Russian Federation that racism and the dissemination of racist ideas should not be tackled using bans and criminal proceedings, since a healthy and democratic society would naturally reject neo-Nazism, racism and other ideas incompatible with democratic principles. Their approach that racist ideas would disappear by themselves in developed democratic societies was incorrect, while their position contradicted the integrated and comprehensive approach to human rights that should be taken. The dissemination of racist and extremist ideas could not be justified as freedom of speech since it ran counter to Member States' obligations under the main international human rights treaties. Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in particular, required States parties to prosecute manifestations of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. He called on delegations which disapproved of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to vote against the proposed amendments.

113. **Ms. Simpson** (United States of America) said that her delegation did not need to defend its position on Nazism; history provided sufficient proof of the commitment of the United States to fighting the Nazis. The draft resolution was a cynical exercise born of political controversies which had arisen decades after the defeat of the Nazis. It was submitted annually by the Russian Federation in a bid to exert influence over other Member States and criminalize free speech and expression, without any genuine effort to combat Nazism, discrimination or anti-Semitism. The United States was disgusted by the glorification and promotion of Nazi ideology: it had fought a war against it and would continue fighting it in the hearts and minds of those who hated. The solution to hate was, however, not censorship but the freedom for goodness and justice to triumph over evil and persecution. The United States continued to remember and memorialize victims of the Holocaust and supported efforts by the United Nations to do the same.

114. Every year since the draft resolution had first been introduced in 2005, her delegation had expressed its concerns and called for a vote on the matter. In preparation for the current session, it had instead drafted amendments to address every aspect of the draft resolution that violated individual freedoms of speech, thought, expression and association. The amendments would not fix every problem with the draft resolution, but would remove overtly problematic portions which violated the principles of freedom of expression and inappropriately misstated historical facts. She called for a recorded vote on the amendments.

115. **Ms. Matlhako** (South Africa), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that her delegation had appreciated the numerous and transparent informal consultations on the draft resolution. As custodian and host of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, South Africa did not support any of the hostile amendments, especially those to remove references to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Her delegation would therefore vote against the amendments.

116. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting, said that his delegation would vote against the proposed amendments since they were hostile and had been submitted too late in the negotiation process.

117. *A recorded vote was taken on the oral amendments proposed by the representative of the United States of America.*

In favour:

Israel, Ukraine, United States of America.

Against:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

118. *The oral amendment to draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.56/Rev.1 was rejected by 81 votes to 3, with 73 abstentions.*

119. **Mr. González Serafini** (Argentina) said that his delegation had abstained from voting because it could not condone the fact that the delegation of the United States had failed to table its 23 amendments during the informal consultations. It called on delegations to actively participate in consultations, to act transparently and to show maximum flexibility throughout the negotiation process so that all draft resolutions submitted to the Third Committee could be adopted without amendment.

120. **Mr. Jürgenson** (Estonia), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania aligned themselves with his statement. The European Union remained fully committed to the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The fight against contemporary forms of all extremist and totalitarian ideologies, including neo-Nazism, must be a consensual priority for the entire international community through the full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other relevant human rights treaties.

121. It was regrettable that the draft resolution continued to underscore issues that were unrelated to combating racism and discrimination. All contemporary forms of racism and discrimination should be addressed in an impartial, balanced and comprehensive way in the draft resolution, with a clear focus on human rights. He expressed concern about language in the draft resolution that addressed too restrictively the fundamental right to freedom of expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, as contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other treaties.

122. The European Union had engaged constructively in negotiations on the draft resolution convened by the main sponsor and had made numerous proposals to strengthen the human rights aspects of the text and address all forms of racism and discrimination in an objective way. Although acknowledging efforts by the delegation of the United States to address its concerns through the proposed amendments, he regretted that they had not been submitted earlier in negotiations when

the European Union could have given them due consideration and support in areas that reflected its own position.

123. Focusing the fight against racism on the teaching of history, monuments, memorials or erroneous references to national liberation movements or other politically motivated issues fell outside the scope of the human rights agenda and provided a one-sided view of history, as shown by the attempts to justify the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

124. The European Union stood ready to engage constructively on the above concerns in an open and transparent manner, including with other Member States that shared similar positions to it, in order to address all forms of racism and discrimination in a comprehensive and unbiased manner. For all those reasons, the European Union had abstained from the vote.

125. **Ms. Simpson** (United States of America) said her delegation requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution as a whole for the same reasons cited in its earlier request to vote on the proposed amendments.

126. **Mr. Barro** (Senegal) said that his delegation wished to withdraw its sponsorship of the draft resolution.

127. *A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.56/Rev.1.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Ukraine, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

128. *Draft resolution A/C.3/72/L.56/Rev.1 was adopted by 125 votes to 2, with 51 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.